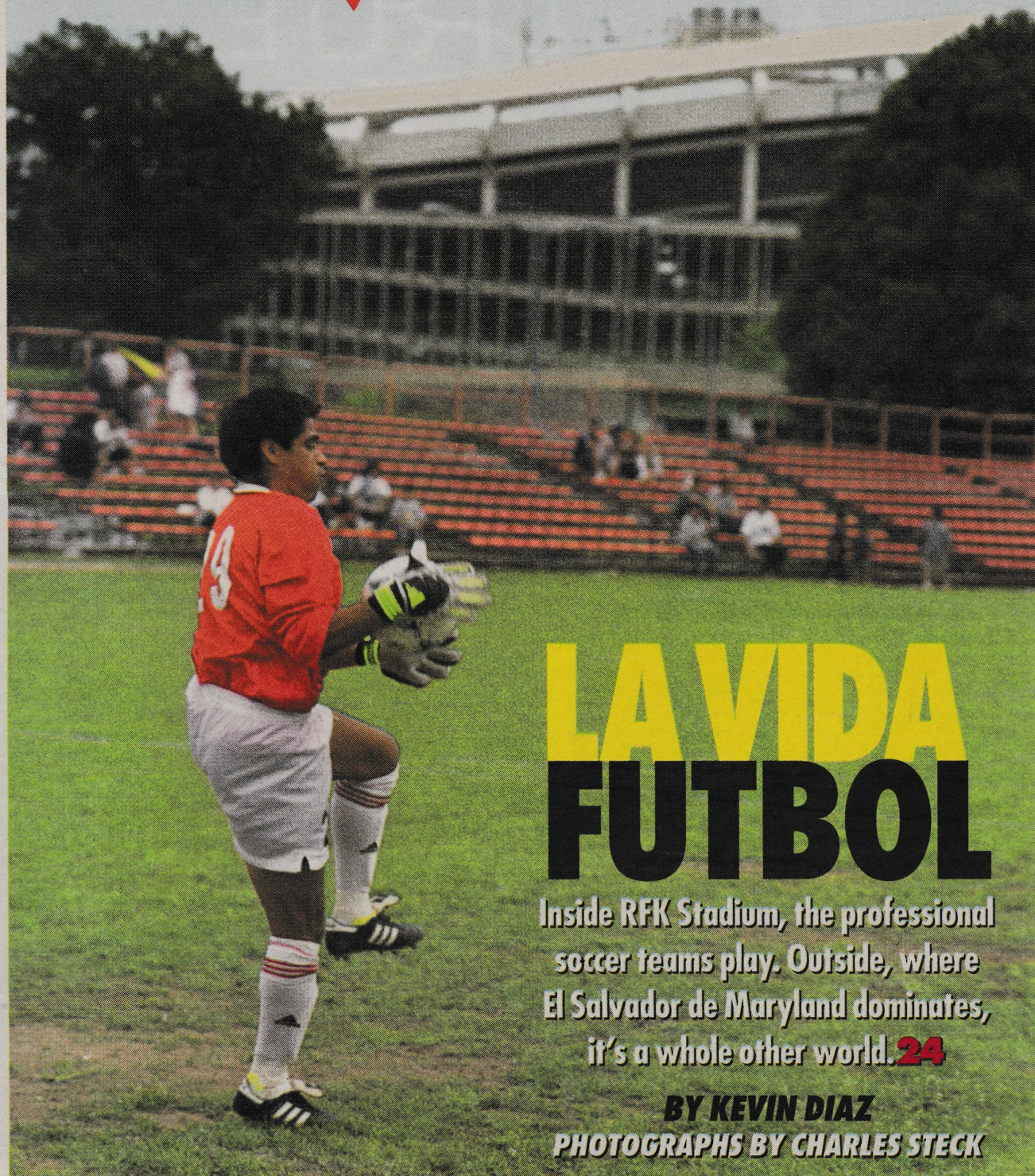


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# CITY WASHINGTON Paper

WASHINGTON'S FREE WEEKLY

VOL. 20, NO. 30 JULY 28–AUG. 3, 2000



## LA VIDA FUTBOL

Inside RFK Stadium, the professional soccer teams play. Outside, where El Salvador de Maryland dominates, it's a whole other world. **24**

**BY KEVIN DIAZ**  
**PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES STECK**



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VOLUME 20, NUMBER 30 JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2000  
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 They must be received 10 days before publication. Subscriptions are  
 available for \$90 per year, inside the U.S. only. Papers will arrive a week  
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## La Vida Futbol

*The kings of Latin soccer play for El Salvador de Maryland.*

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## DARROW MONTGOMERY



National Mall, July 1



# Losing Their Religion



## BOOKS

In college, my aspiring social-activist friends—meritocrats from humble beginnings, all—dreamed of an education that would give them the power to make a difference in the lives of impoverished immigrant Korean women or improve the transparency of the political campaign system. So they dutifully went to law school or enrolled in graduate programs in political science. Now, as they near graduation, some of them talk of the intellectual satisfactions of protecting major-label record companies against Internet interlopers or of maximizing the efficiency of New York's workfare program. What happened?

Is it that the graduates, older and wiser, have found a weakness in their adolescent dreams of social justice and democratic improvement? Or is it that the system of graduate education itself eviscerated their aspirations?

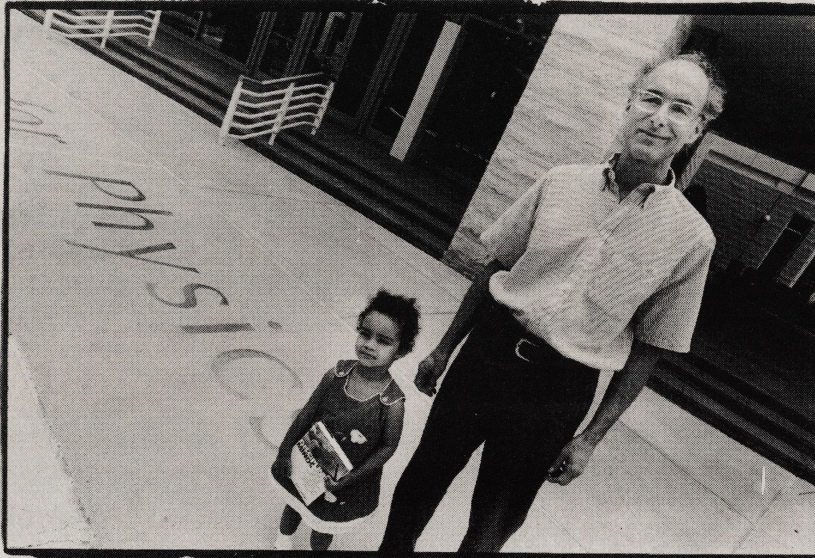
D.C. resident Jeff Schmidt would say that these newly minted professionals are still making a difference in society—just not the kind they'd once hoped to make. Indeed, he argues in *Disciplined Minds: A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals and the Soul-Battering System That Shapes Their Lives* (Rowman & Littlefield) that students' professional choices—and the lifetime of decisions they can look forward to making as professionals—have a more powerful impact on democracy than their votes do. The reason, he says, that 80 percent of the entering students at Harvard Law School say they want to pursue a career in public service but 90 percent take jobs at corporate law firms after graduation is that the professional world demands their "ideological discipline," or adherence to an assigned point of view. Professional education transforms not just what you know, but who you think you are as well.

Schmidt, a former editor of the College Park, Md.-based science monthly *Physics Today*, has collected two decades of reflection on the problem of graduate training and professional life into his 280-page book. Schmidt holds a Ph.D. in physics from the University of California, Irvine, but you don't have to be a laser jock or lab rat to see that graduate programs combine sleep deprivation, too much work, rigorous competition, social isolation, and pressure to pursue particular pathways—and force students to accept the regimen or be booted from the program. This is a strategy designed to reshape a young person's social and political preferences, says Schmidt. "[Students] enter professional training with deeply held feelings about the personal and societal promise of professional work, and during professional training struggle against what often amounts to a brutal attempt to change their very identities," he writes. The struggle of their lives, as any disgruntled associate at a law firm will tell you, is to square their beliefs with the bullying of their profession.

To lessen the conflicts, says Schmidt, the professions require that future workers be transformed while they're still trainees. These transformed employees then can "work within an assigned ideology rather than from a specific list of tasks, because the professional works with unpredictable events," says the 54-year-old author. And

so the creative work goes to those who can be trusted not to stray from the path, while more creative types often find themselves working as waiters. (Schmidt does not except journalists from his critique of the professions.)

Schmidt's effort to help grad students resist their indoctrination through such chapters as "How to Survive Professional Training with Your Values Intact" was met with some resistance at *Physics Today*. In late May, Schmidt was fired after 19 years on the job, he says, for allegedly writing the book on company time. He successfully contested that charge with the State of Maryland Department of Labor and is now collecting unemployment benefits.



We're All Dissonant Beings: Jeff Schmidt with future worker (and daughter) Joshua Rose Schmidt

"The people who were most concerned about others seemed to be the least likely to survive," says Schmidt of his time in grad school. Not much seems to have changed for him, even in the working world.

—Garance Franke-Ruta

## Scene and Not Heard



## MUSIC

It's a well-worn complaint among would-be songsters doing time in one of the many anonymous bands fighting for recognition in Washington: D.C.'s fractured music scene is deeply frustrating. Faced with indifferent audiences, disinterested club owners, and a

shrinking supply of affordable practice spaces, what's an honest bunch of starving musicians with big ambitions to do?

First things first: Circle the wagons and talk things through.

"We wanted to bring together diverse factions of the music

community," says Allison Sheedy, booker of the Black Cat and one of the organizers of "Scene Beat," an upcoming all-day local-music conference at the 14th Street hot spot. Sheedy joined forces with Black Cat czar Dante Ferrando and Lisa White of the 9:30 Club to offer a unique social service to musicians too wrapped up in broken guitar strings to navigate the complex world of promo packages and demo tapes. Scene Beat's unusual syllabus reads like a condensed version of the first semester at rock 'n' roll high school: \$5 buys panel discussions like "Making the Music and Keeping a Band Together" and "Making a Recording and What You Can Do With It." The safe space spun around these guided chat sessions will provide a much-needed opportunity for late-comers to D.C. music's harsh realm to have their questions answered by a collection of wizened elders who have been there, done that, and have the hearing loss to prove it.

Sheedy also hopes that the forum will force citizens from all corners of the city's largely unmapped musical geography to surface and speak their minds—if only for the afternoon. "There are so many different ideas about what the D.C. scene is," she says. "It's not just indie rock. It's not just 9:30 [Club] bands. It's not just local hip-hop. It's everything, and it's exciting to have all these different factions in one space."

Of course, Scene Beat's organizers may just be setting themselves up for a fall: Cynics taking stock of Scene Beat's ambitious offerings will inevitably needle the event's would-be diversity. Toni Blackman of the Freestyle Union aside, the panelists are drawn from the mostly white world of D.C. indie rock labels and press.

Though Dischord luminaries Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson are notably absent, Kim Coletta of DeSoto, Phil Manley of Trans Am, and Kristen Thompson of the defunct Simple Machines will all unveil their time-tested methods for steering through the scene's stormy seas. However, a D.C. music symposium that

offers instruction on how to string and tune a guitar, instead of advice on setting up turntables or mastering MIDI technology, may find a few catcalls.

As if that weren't enough for Scene Beat to contend with, the event may also come under fire for hobnobbing with big business. The presence of WHFS DJ Dave Marsh and Jimmie's Chicken Shack manager Richard Burgess paints what otherwise seems a warm, fuzzy, do-it-yourself-friendly afternoon in an ominous shade of corporate gray. Aren't these people part of the profit-margin-minded machine endangering independent music in the first place?

Sheedy is unabashed when defending Scene Beat against charges of sleeping with the enemy. "I hope that [the event] represents a corporate element," she insists. "Some musicians in D.C. are interested in getting played on WHFS."

Should the back-and-forth become too heated, participants will be able to chill out with post-former sets from Lazy K, the Ruby Dare, Mary Prankster, and Phaser.

—Justin Moyer

Scene Beat workshops run from noon to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, July 29, at the Black Cat, 1831 14th Street NW.

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